

Righteous Judgment

February 18, 2018

Romans 2:1-11

1 Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. 2 You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth." 3 Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

Today I will be discussing Paul's letter to the Romans. The audience is the Roman church. Paul did not start the church, so he has no authority as an apostle, but he wants to claim the Roman church. There are a few key points that he preaches. 1, The gospel is what God is. The gospel is the character of God. The nature of God is revealed through the gospel. 2, Justification by faith. It is a matter of the right relationship between God and humanity. Faith is all about that relationship. It is not about us, it's about us and God in relationship. 3, The righteousness of God. It is about God rectifying the human condition. The real heart of Romans is the faithfulness of God and how God is faithful to Israel. God is always faithful to Israel.

The Scripture starts with the word "therefore" which means the lesson is based on previous information which requires knowledge of what was written before it. So, what we read today is part of a larger discussion. In chapter one the greeting is expanded, compared to other letters, because Paul has never been there. Paul sees himself as a slave to Christ and he sees Christ as the Son of God. In the thanksgiving he sets out his concern for them. He creates a relationship by saying how much he cares for them even though he does not know them. He wants to bear fruit. This means that he wants to bring more people into the church like he has in other places. Verses 16 and 17 were covered last week, they are seen as the theme to the letter. I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation, in it the righteousness of God is revealed, the one who is righteous will live by faith. Paul sees the gospel as the power of God, revealing the righteousness of God, the righteous will live by faith but more than faith - they will live a life that is based on faith.

Then Paul addresses the human condition. What is happening is that God is acting to bring in the Gentiles. So, the offer of salvation to the Gentiles needs a basis. Paul addresses this on multiple levels. The human situation is that humans face God's judgment, are trapped by the power of evil, and this requires God to respond to the problem.

Paul points out two important things. The first is that the wrath of God is revealed. The second is that there is no excuse for humans because humans know God. As Paul puts it God's eternal power, and divine nature, can be seen through everything that is made. I have referred to this concept many times in many different ways. Anytime and on any day the things of nature provide evidence of God. I see God in the rain, the oxygen we breath, the flowers, and all signs

of life. With all of the evidence around us there is no excuse. People just fail to honor God and they fail to give thanks to God. They give up God for idols. So, you are not judged by ignorance, we are all guilty.

Paul teaches that the foundation of evil is idol worship. Paul addressed the worst of sins. Many people today point out, preach and teach, these evils. But Paul is not pointing these evils; what Paul is teaching is that all kinds of evil starts with idol worship. Key to all of the problems that face humanity is idol worship - putting things in front of God.

Then we get to today's Scripture. Therefore, there is no excuse for it. We have a lesson on judging that compliments Jesus. Matthew 7:1 and Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." The teaching of Paul and the teaching of Jesus is if you pass judgment on another you condemn yourself. You see, God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance. This is demonstrated in the action of Jesus. I refer your attention for a moment to Judas. We all know the action of Judas was an act of betrayal. Instead of being upset or angry, Jesus washed his feet. The act of kindness was a lesson on humility but Judas failed to repent. And Jesus welcomed Judas at the table. That act of kindness was lesson on hospitality, oneness, and fellowship but Judas still failed to repent. At that time Judas had a hard and impenitent heart. God always offers awareness of transgression, an offer to repent, and salvation. I will repeat this for memory sake and emphasize the word "always." God **always** offers awareness of transgression, an offer to repent, and salvation. This is God's consistent and loving response to the human condition.

The way Paul phrases it is, those who are patient, those who do good and seek God's glory, will be given eternal life. Glory and honor and peace are for everyone who does good. For those who are self-seeking, who do not obey the truth but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. Anguish and distress are for everyone who does evil. There is always this duality. It is either one way or the other. It is never in the middle.

God shows no partiality to anyone - Jew or Greek, male or female, or color of skin. When it come to righteousness everyone is on equal footing. If you do good you get good. If you do bad you get bad. Everybody gets justice through God's righteous judgment.